000 If death had not placed a brutal term on his wanderings a few weeks later, the serious Mouhot might also have been the first man to question the impassive Buddhas on the mysterious past of this remote land, felt the infinite charm of its melodious nights when the khenes give voice to their moving chords, and -- who can say? -- sung the grace of the pretty girls with bare and gilded breasts who in their carefree way weave multicolored scarves under their flowered huts.

105 He contents himself with noting rapidly: "Fortunately this is not like Siam, and I can get help from the natives. . . . The /225/ Laotians are peaceable, submissive, patient, sober, trusting, credulous, superstitious, faithful, simple and naive. They naturally /685/ hold robbery in horror. The story is told that one of their kings had thieves fried in a cauldron of boiling oil, but since the ravages of the last wars a certain number of thieves are beginning to be found among them who have been driven to rapine by poverty or by the spirit of vengeance.

/685/ "Besides cultivating rice and maize the Laotians grow batatas,
/241/ gourds, red peppers, melons and other vegetables. . . . They sell
/438 the Chinese ivory and pelts from tigers and wild animals. They
434/ also trade gold dust, silver and copper ore, gamboge, cardamom, lac, wax, dyeing wood, cotton, silk and all the products of their soil for heavy porcelain, small glassware and other small commodities of Chinese industry.

"The Laotians are not made for war. Ever since the beginning they have been subjected to the neighboring kings, and have never been able to shake off this heavy yoke.

"They seem to be more industrious than the Siamese and to /101/ possess more of the spirit of adventure and trade. Although both peoples /226/ have many points of resemblance, both physical and moral, the Laotians can nevertheless be distinguished by their dialect and especially by their customs, which are simpler and more amiable.

533 "...Their music is very sweet, harmonious and sentimental.
101 Only three people are needed to make a melodious concert. One plays a bamboo organ, the second signs romances with the accent of a man inspired, and the third strikes strips of a sonorous wood together in rhythm, the clicking sounds of which have a striking effect" (1).

1. This praise of Laotian music should be compared with the